Importance to production of pulses, legumes and oil seeds

4127. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that more importance is to be given to production of pulses, legumes and oil seeds for sustained food security of the country;

(b) if so, how Government plan to tackle the situation; and

(c) if not, how Government plan to meet the balance and nutritional needs of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Centrally Sponsored National Pulses Development Project (NPDP) and Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) are under Implementation in the Country to increase the production and productivity of pulses, legumes and oil seeds respectively. In addition, in the context of doubling food production & making India hunger free in ten years, an Action Plan for increasing the production of pulses, legumes and oilseeds during 9th and 10th Plan has been prepared on the basis of production targets set out by Planning Commission. The targets of pulses and oilseeds have been fixed by Planning Commission at 20 million tonnes and 30 million tonnes respectively for the year 2007-2008.

(c) Question does not arise.

Loan Facilities to Farmers

4128. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps being taken by Government to improve the loan facilities to the poor and marginal farmers in the country;

(b) whether Government are formulating a new loaning policy for the Arunachal Pradesh farmers, and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) With a view to improving the loan facilities to the poor and marginal farmers in the country, the following steps have been taken by RBI/NABARD:—

— The parameters for defining Small Farmers/Marginal Farmers (SF/ MF) have been fixed on district-wise basis taking into account the Geo-physical conditions.

— The level of minimum performance for financing SF/MF by District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) has been prescribed on district-wise basis. It varies between 10 and 50 per cent of the total loans issued.

— NABARD while sanctioning Short-term credit limits to District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) earmarks a portion thereof for being utilized exclusively for financing the SF/MF.

— Separate short-term credit limits to DCCBs operating in predominantly tribal districts are being sanctioned by NABARD since 1995-96 onwards.

— Interest rate is charged at the fixed rate of 4% per annum on Seasonal Agricultural Operations (SAO) refinance to tribals.

— Minimum Involvement and audit classification norms have been relaxed for DCCBs operating in tribal districts.

— According to information available, around 50% of SAO loans disbursed by DCCBs in various states have flown to the SF/MF.

— With a view to improving further the flow of credit to SF/MF, NABARD has raised the minimum level of financing to the SF/MF from 10 to 12 per cent.

— A target of 10 per cent of net bank credit has been stipulated for lending to the weaker sections under priority sector by the domestic schedule commercial banks.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Various concessions in the flow of credit such as relaxation in Minimum Involvement, the level of recovery etc. have already been provided to North-Eastern Region including Arunachal Pradesh.

Returns from Agriculture Profession

4129. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news-item titled "Agriculture is just side-business for farmers, money is elsewhere" which appeared in the Indian Express, on 7th April, 2000 and on the following day;